

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-11

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DRAFTED BY NEA/P:WBHARRIS:LHW
APPROVED BY NEA/P:GFSHERMAN
PA/PRESS - MR. CARTER
H - MR. FLATEN
SSM - MR. MC ANDREW
NEA/ARN - MR. DRAPER
NEA/IAI - MR. SMITH
NEA/ARP - MR. TWINAM
NEA/EGY - MR. MARTHINSEN

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O 192325Z JUN 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USMISSION SINAI
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION USNATO
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AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
USCINCEUR
SECDEF WASHDC 0000

JCS WASHDC 0000
CIA WASHDC 0000
NSC WASHDC 0000
USICA
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS POUCH

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CINCEUR FOR POLAD; TEL AVIV FOR PAO, DELIVER BY 9 A.M.

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - JUNE 19, 1978

1. FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS
FROM DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING FOR JUNE 19. FYI ONLY,
OFFICER PRESENT TODAY WAS HODDING CARTER.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENT ON THE ACTION BY THE ISRAELI
CABINET YESTERDAY?

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A. I HAVE NOTHING SPECIFICALLY ON THE ISRAELI ANSWERS.
WE ARE CONSULTING WITH THE PARTIES ABOUT THE ANSWERS WHICH
ISRAEL DID PROVIDE THROUGH ITS CABINET. AMBASSADOR LEWIS
HAD A TALK WITH ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTER DAYAN THIS MORNING
IN ISRAEL AS PART OF THOSE CONSULTATIONS. WE HAVE HEARD
FROM THE AMBASSADOR ABOUT HIS MEETING WITH DAYAN.

TO ANTICIPATE QUESTIONS, AMBASSADOR EILTS HAS ALSO BEEN IN
TOUCH WITH EGYPTIAN AUTHORITIES SINCE WL RECEIVED THE
ANSWERS, BUT I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING FOR YOU AT THIS POINT ON
THOSE DIPLOMATIC CONTACTS. IN ANY CASE, I WOULD NOT GIVE
YOU AN EGYPTIAN RESPONSE TO THE ISRAELI ANNOUNCEMENT.

Q. THE AMERICAN CLARIFICATIONS WERE BASICALLY TWO, AS I
UNDERSTOOD THEM. ONE, WHETHER ISRAEL WOULD ACCEPT AN
INTERIM SETTLEMENT LEADING TO SOVEREIGNTY ON THE WEST
BANK; AND TWO, HOW THE ISRAELIS WOULD PROPOSE HAVING PALES-
TINIAN REPRESENTATION IN THESE NEGOTIATIONS. THERE APPEAR-
ED TO BE NO ANSWER AT ALL TO THAT SECOND QUESTION. IS
THAT READING IT RIGHT?

A. NO. I AM NOT GOING TO TRY TO CHARACTERIZE THE RE-
SPONSE THAT THEY GAVE. I THINK, HOWEVER, THAT THE
RESPONSE DID SPEAK TO QUESTIONS OF BOTH THE TERRITORIES--
THAT IS, THE FUTURE OF THEM--AND OF THE PALESTINIANS. BUT
I AM NOT GOING TO TRY TO GO ANY FURTHER THAN JUST POINTING
OUT WHAT I THINK THE TEXT OF THEIR STATEMENT DID SAY.

Q. THERE IS A REPORT IN THIS MORNING'S PAPERS SAYING THAT ONE OF THE AMERICAN OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE MIGHT BE PRESENTING A PLAN FOR THE MIDDLE EAST TO ALL PARTIES. DOES SUCH A PLAN EXIST? IS ONE BEING FORMULATED? WILL IT BE PRESENTED?

A. WE HAVE SAID A NUMBER OF TIMES IN THE PAST, MORE THAN I CAN REALLY REMEMBER AT THIS POINT, THAT AT SOME POINT
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THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT MAY DECIDE TO MAKE SOME SUGGESTIONS OF ITS OWN ON THIS ISSUE IN ORDER TO HELP THE TWO GOVERNMENTS MOVE THE PROCESS FORWARD, AND OBVIOUSLY TO REACH AGREEMENT.

WE DID USE THAT PROCESS IN HELPING THE GOVERNMENTS REACH AN AGENDA FOR THE JERUSALEM MEETING LAST JANUARY. BUT, TO ANSWER YOUR SPECIFIC QUESTION AS TO WHERE WE ARE NOW, NO DECISION HAS BEEN TAKEN AS TO WHETHER OR WHAT AMERICAN SUGGESTIONS MIGHT BE PUT FORWARD.

Q. COULD I CLARIFY ONE POINT? IN THE PAST, IT SEEMS TO ME, WHENEVER QUESTIONS WERE RAISED ABOUT A PLAN, THE ANSWER HAS BEEN THAT IF THE TWO SIDES SEEM TO BE NEAR EACH OTHER ON A GIVEN POSITION, WE MIGHT OFFER SOME INTERMEDIATE POSITION. BUT THE IDEA OF A MASTER PLAN OR OVERALL PROPOSAL HAS ALWAYS BEEN REJECTED.

A. WITHOUT CHARACTERIZING SOMETHING AS A MASTER PLAN, OR WHAT HAVE YOU, THE SECRETARY HAS NOTED IN FACT IN THAT INTERVENING PERIOD THAT IT MIGHT BE THAT WE WOULD HAVE TO COME FORWARD WITH SOME IDEAS, SOME SUGGESTIONS.

Q. YOU ARE TAKING THAT A STEP FURTHER, IT SEEMS TO ME. YOU JUST SAID A MOMENT AGO THAT NO DECISION HAS BEEN TAKEN

ABOUT WHETHER AND WHAT AMERICAN IDEAS WOULD BE PUT FORWARD. YOU ARE SAYING, IN EFFECT, THAT THERE IS CONSIDERATION AT THIS JUNCTURE OF SOME AMERICAN IDEAS.

A. WELL, THE ARTFUL CRAFTSMEN WHO ARTFULLY CRAFTED THIS ANSWER HAD THREE PARTS TO IT, AND I WANT TO REPEAT THE FIRST PART IN ANSWER TO YOURS.
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THAT IS, THAT WE HAVE SAID REPEATEDLY IN PAST MONTHS THAT AT SOME POINT THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT MAY DECIDE TO MAKE SOME SUGGESTIONS OF ITS OWN ON THIS ISSUE IN ORDER TO HELP THE TWO GOVERNMENTS REACH AGREEMENT. IT HAS BEEN

NOTED IN THIS THAT WE FOLLOWED SUCH A PROCEDURE, AND YOU ALL RECALL, IN BRIDGING THE DIFFICULTIES THAT WE HAD ON THE AGENDA IN JERUSALEM. AND, TO REPEAT THE THIRD PART OF THIS, NO DECISION HAS BEEN TAKEN AS TO WHETHER OR WHAT AMERICAN SUGGESTIONS MIGHT BE PUT FORWARD AT SOME POINT.

NOW, I THINK THAT THAT CARRIES WITH IT THE IMPLICATION THAT OBVIOUSLY CONSIDERATION HAS BEEN GIVEN TO THE NEED FOR SUCH AN ACTION BY US, AND THAT NO SUCH DECISION TO TAKE SUCH ACTION HAS BEEN TAKEN.

Q. THE ONLY DISTINCTION SEEMS TO BE AN AMERICAN PLAN, AND I WONDER WHY YOU SORT OF REJECT, REACT NEGATIVELY, TO THE IDEA THAT THERE IS AN AMERICAN PLAN TO COME FORWARD AT SOME POINT. NOW, IS THERE A PLAN BEING FORMULATED?

A. I THINK, AGAIN, THAT THERE ARE TWO THINGS ON THIS. IF THERE WERE A PLAN BEING FORMULATED, IT WOULD NOT BE IN MY PROVINCE TO SAY SO RIGHT NOW.

SECOND, IT IS VERY EARLY DAYS, FOLLOWING THE ISRAELI RESPONSE; AND IT WOULD BE, I THINK, WRONG TO ASSUME THAT WE HAD A PLAN READY TO PUT IN POSITION, GIVEN WE ONLY GOT A RESPONSE YESTERDAY.

Q. YOU KEEP ON SAYING RESPONSE, AND THERE IS AN ASSUMPTION THAT EVERYBODY KNOWS CLEARLY WHAT IT IS A RESPONSE TO. COULD YOU TELL US WHAT IT IS THAT THE UNITED STATES SPECIFICALLY ASKS THE ISRAELIS TO RESPOND TO?

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A. I'M NOT SURE WHETHER I AM AUTHORIZED TO DO THAT. LET ME SEE IF I CAN PUT DOWN A ONE-TWO EXACT THING ON THAT.

Q. WOULD IT BE FAIR TO SAY THAT WHAT THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT IS GOING TO DO NOW IS TAKE THE ISRAELI RESPONSE

TO THESE TWO QUESTIONS, GIVE THEM TO THE EGYPTIANS AND GET THEIR RESPONSE, THEN TRY TO COME UP WITH AN AMERICAN IDEA TO TRY TO BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN THE ISRAELI POSITION AND THE EGYPTIAN POSITION, AND THEN SUBMIT THIS AMERICAN POSITION AS A COMPROMISE TO BOTH SIDES?

A. THAT IS AN INTERESTING SCENARIO. MY PROBLEM IS I DO NOT HAVE AN OFFICIAL SCENARIO TO GIVE YOU. WE ARE GOING TO CONTINUE TO CONSULT; AND UNTIL WE HAVE REACHED A DECISION ON WHAT OUR NEXT STEP IS, I AM NOT EVEN GOING TO BE ABLE TO HINT AS TO WHAT IT MIGHT BE. OBVIOUSLY THE SECRETARY ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS HAS GIVEN A GENERALIZED ANSWER TO YOUR QUESTION.

Q. WITH WHOM ARE YOU CONSULTING? YOU SAID YOU WERE CONSULTING WITH THE PARTIES. IS THAT EGYPT AND ISRAEL?

A. I WOULD SAY CERTAINLY WITH THEM, YES. THOSE ARE THE ONES MOST DIRECTLY CONCERNED. I AM NOT AWARE OF WHO ELSE WE MIGHT BE (CONSULTING WITH). IF YOU WANT TO ASK ME THE QUESTION, I WILL SEE. I AM NOT AWARE OF THAT CONSULTATION.

Q. WHAT IS THE LIKELIHOOD OF EITHER SECRETARY VANCE OR AMBASSADOR ATHERTON GOING OUT SOON?

A. WHILE THE CONSULTATION IS UNDERWAY, I CAN'T TELL YOU WHAT MAY BE THE NEXT STEPS IN THE PEACE PROCESS. IT UNCLASSIFIED

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SHOULD BE OBVIOUS THAT ANOTHER TRIP TO THE AREA IS QUITE CONCEIVABLE. BUT AT THIS POINT I CAN TELL YOU THAT, AS OF MID-MORNING, NOTHING HAS BEEN SPECIFICALLY DECIDED ABOUT SUCH A POSSIBILITY.

I WAS ASKED, I THINK ABOUT THE SECRETARY.

Q. I SAID THE SECRETARY OR ATHERTON.

A. OKAY, ON ROY ATHERTON, OBVIOUSLY AT SOME POINT SOMEONE MAY NEED TO GO BACK OUT TO THE AREA. AT THIS POINT, HE HAS NO PLANS TO RETURN TO THE AREA, BUT WE OBVIOUSLY DON'T RULE IT OUT.

Q. DO YOU KNOW THE LEVEL OF THE STAFF THAT WILL ACCOMPANY THE VICE PRESIDENT ON HIS TRIP AT THE END OF THE MONTH?

A. LET ME TAKE THE QUESTION AS TO WHO WILL BE GOING FROM HERE, AND I ASSUME I CAN GET YOU THE REST OF THE DELEGATION. I DON'T KNOW IF IT'S ALL PUT TOGETHER.

Q. DOES THAT NOW TAKE ON THE APPEARANCE OF A SUBSTANTIVE TRIP AS OPPOSED TO JUST A GOODWILL MISSION?

A. I HAVE REAL HESITATION IN TRYING TO CHARACTERIZE A VICE PRESIDENTIAL TRIP. HE HAS ALWAYS CARRIED SUBSTANTIVE WEIGHT IN THE TRIPS HE HAS TAKEN. I DON'T WANT TO SUGGEST ANYTHING WHATSOEVER ABOUT HIS TRIP. YOU MIGHT ASK THE VICE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE HOW HE SEES HIS AGENDA.

Q. YOU SAID ON TRAVEL THAT NOTHING HAS BEEN SPECIFICALLY DECIDED. YOU WERE RESPONDING TO ATHERTON AND VANCE? ARE THEY STILL YOUR TRAVELING MEN?

A. YES.

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Q. BUT SHALL WE PUT VANCE AND ATHERTON IN THE SAME CATEGORY AS A LIKELIHOOD?

A. YES.

Q. AND SHALL WE THINK OF THEM AS AN EXCLUSIVE CLUB OF TWO? OR IS THE POINT ABOUT MONDALE WELL TAKEN--SHOULD IT BE "THREE" NOW? IS HE GOING AS A GOODWILL AMBASSADOR OR A DIPLOMAT?

A. THE MISSION THAT THE VICE PRESIDENT WILL BE UNDERTAKING IS ONE WHICH I AM NOT GOING TO TRY TO DEFINE FOR HIM. I WOULD ONLY POINT, HOWEVER, TO THE FACT THAT HE HAS DONE WORK--AND IT'S NOT EVEN DROPPING A HINT TO YOU--I JUST DON'T WANT TO TRY TO SPEAK FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT.

ON THE QUESTION OF TRAVEL BY PEOPLE IN THIS BUILDING, THE ANSWER TO YOUR QUESTION IS: YES, THE SECRETARY AND SPECIAL AMBASSADOR ATHERTON ARE OBVIOUSLY THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN CARRYING AND WHO IT IS ANTICIPATED WOULD CARRY THE DIPLOMATIC LOAD FOR SPECIAL MISSIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

TRIPS BY EITHER ONE OF THEM, AS I REPEAT MYSELF, ARE OBVIOUSLY QUITE CONCEIVABLE. BUT THAT MUST BE BALANCED, BECAUSE IT'S TRUE THAT WE HAVE NOTHING SPECIFIC PLANNED FOR EITHER ONE. I WOULD NOT RULE OUT TRAVEL PLANS, BUT I WOULDN'T PACK YOUR BAGS TOMORROW EITHER.

Q. IF THE SECRETARY GOES, WOULD IT BE A RESCUE MISSION?

A. NO. IT WOULD BE CONTINUING THE PEACE PROCESS.

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Q. ARE YOU SAYING THE ISRAELIS RESPONDED, OR REPLIED, BECAUSE THERE IS A DISTINCTION? HAS THE ISRAELI CABINET TAKEN A RESPONSIVE ACTION TOWARD THE U.S. REQUEST FOR A POSITION ON THE PALESTINIANS' TERRITORY? OR HAVE THEY ANSWERED?

A. I THINK I WOULD SAY THEY HAVE ANSWERED OUR QUESTIONS.

Q. AMBASSADOR ATHERTON, IN SEVERAL SPEECHES IN THE LAST MONTH OR SO, HAS OUTLINED WHAT HE SAID THE UNITED STATES HOPED WOULD BE AN APPROACH FOR THE WEST BANK WHICH WAS AN INTERIM SOLUTION THAT WOULD BE DECIDED BY THE VARIOUS PARTIES, AND FOR A FIVE-YEAR PERIOD. AND WITHIN THAT FIVE-

YEAR PERIOD AN ULTIMATE SETTLEMENT COULD BE NEGOTIATED--
TAKING ACCOUNT OF THE PALESTINIAN INTERESTS. NOW THE IS-
RAELI ANSWER--AT LEAST THE PART THAT WAS MADE PUBLIC--
DOES NOT SEEM TO MESH WITH THE ATHERTON STATEMENTS. I
MEAN, IS THERE ANY WAY YOU CAN DISCUSS THE FACT THAT IT
DOESN'T? OR MAYBE YOU THINK THAT IT DOES.

A. AGAIN, I REALLY CANNOT, AT THIS POINT, TRY TO MATCH
IT, CHARACTERIZE IT, OR IN ANY WAY CLIP AN OFFICIAL VALUE
JUDGMENT OR COMPARATIVE STATEMENT ON IT.

I WOULD WANT TO OBSERVE, HOWEVER, THIS: WE HAVE OFFERED
IN THE PAST, A NUMBER OF BRIDGING IDEAS. WE HAVE MADE
OUR POSITIONS CLEAR ON POSSIBILITIES. WE HAVE NEVER SAID
THAT ONLY OUR APPROACH WAS A PROPER ONE, AND IN FACT HAVE
ALWAYS SAID THAT ULTIMATELY THE ONLY ONE THAT WOULD WORK
WOULD BE THE ONE THAT WAS WORKED OUT BY THE PARTIES. AND
SO I WOULDN'T WANT TO RUSH TOO FAR WITH THE IDEA THAT SOME
PARTY DID NOT COME UP WITH AN EXACT DUPLICATE, OR REPLICA,
OF WHAT WE HAD SUGGESTED--THAT WE WOULD CONSIDER IT WRONG.

Q. YOU SAID YESTERDAY THAT THE TALKS WITH THE EGYPTIANS
WERE "USEFUL," WHEREAS YOU DIDN'T CHARACTERIZE THE IS-
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RAELI RESPONSE. DOES IT MEAN THAT THE EGYPTIANS--

A. NO. I REALLY WOULD NOT DRAW A CONCLUSION FROM THAT.
THERE WERE TWO DIFFERENT PEOPLE WRITING THEM.

Q. THE INITIAL INTERPRETATION GIVEN THIS MORNING AND LAST
NIGHT TO THE AMERICAN REACTION TO THE ISRAELI RESPONSE HAS
BEEN THAT THE U.S. HAS BEEN DISAPPOINTED, THAT THE IS-
RAELIS DID NOT GO FAR ENOUGH. IS THAT AN HONEST REFLEC-
TION?

A. I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT I CAN OFFER YOU AN OFFICIAL
RESPONSE, AND I DON'T KNOW WHO HAS BEEN OFFERING THE
OTHERS.
VANCE

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